

GUIDE

formerly TECHNIQUES *for Convert Makers*

A REPORT ON AMERICAN CONVERT
WORK

John T. McGinn, C.S.P.

A FIRST LECTURE TO PROSPECTIVE
CONVERTS

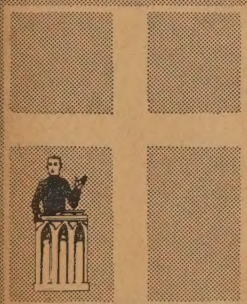
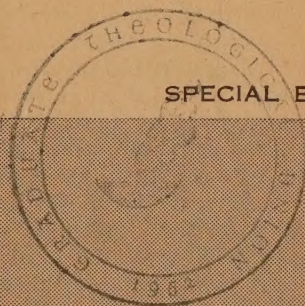
Most Rev. Fulton J. Sheen

PARISH PROGRAM FOR CONVERTS

Rev. Harry E. Majerus

Publication of the Paulist Fathers

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IT SEEMS TO ME

WE come to you this month in new dress and with a new title. These changes were adopted in response to your helpful suggestions and out of our wish to serve you more effectively. I trust they meet with your approval.

Our purpose remains unaltered. Our primary goal is to aid priests and seminarians further the Church's apostolate for the conversion of American non-Catholics. Winning a single soul to the Faith is not child's play. And converting a great nation is a task which, along with fervent prayer, deserves our highest competence. In original articles and significant reprints we hope to keep you abreast of the missionary principles and methods that deserve your careful study.

This publication first appeared in January of 1947. The Paulist Fathers were convinced that many of our non-Catholic neighbors were looking at the Church with new and sympathetic interest. The prestige of the Papacy was at its highest in many centuries. The tragic insecurity of our time had revived a concern for spiritual realities. And the Catholic Church in our land had come to full maturity, with our Catholic people entering more easily into the full stream of American life. For these and many other reasons, the time seemed ripe for an intelligent, prayerful and charitable approach to our Separated Brethren.

These convictions have not been shaken during the past decade. Grace is at work in the souls of Christ's "other sheep." It requires only our human co-operation to improve their good dispositions and win many of them to the fullness of Christ's truth and grace.

A word of grateful thanks is due to those readers who have been subscribers from the beginning; to editors, writers and publishers who have graciously permitted us to reprint copyright material; and to the General Council of the Paulist Fathers whose subsidy enables us to meet increased costs due to the larger content of this revised periodical.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

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■ A REPORT ON

American Convert Work

By John T. McGinn, C.S.P.

Each year in the United States 150,000 converts enter the Catholic Church. Considered by itself, this is a rather impressive figure. But when we consider that ours is a nation of some 170 million people (well over 100 million of them still outside the Church) and when we remember that there are some 40 million potential Catholic apostles, these convert statistics leave us little cause for complacency. The trial balance is even less encouraging when we recall that a considerable number of Catholics lapse from the Church every year.

"But as far as conversions are concerned," says Father Sheerin in *The Catholic World*, "Catholicism and Protestantism in America are like two great forces that have reached a stalemate in competing for the minds of Americans. Neither side is making any great gains."

But the prospect of a nation's conversion must go beyond mere statistics. The mysterious workings of God's grace must be taken into account. There are moral forces at work, which elude the calculations of the actuary, that can accelerate the growth or the decline of the Church in any land. And many Catholics see two such moral forces that may, if our zeal is equal to our God-given opportunities, win increasing numbers of converts in the years ahead.

First, there is the current "return to religion" in the United States. Americans have never been an irreligious people. Militant atheists have never been more than a negligible minority. Nor have our skeptical professors or writers achieved decisive influence.

But if religion did not suffer greatly from all-out attack, it suffered severely from sheer neglect. A creeping erosion set in which progressively weakened the spiritual vitality of American Protestantism. Church-going declined and Bible reading ceased to be a daily practice for many. The sturdy conviction of God's Majesty and Justice, which had been so firmly ingrained in the 250 Protestant sects of our nation, lost much of its influence in daily life. Catholic and Protestant leaders agreed that secularism (as the American hierarchy in their annual statement a decade ago put it) "was doing more than anything else to blight our heritage of Christian culture."

SPIRITUAL ANEMIA

Numerous forces contributed to cause this spiritual anemia. But there is little doubt that a high standard of living, labor-saving devices, multiplied creature comforts and innumerable means of amusement induced a forgetfulness of the things that matter. God and the future life seemed less and less relevant. To a people who had become increasingly self-sufficient, religion had lost something of its former urgency. In such a spiritual climate it is understandable that inquirers were fewer than we might have wished.

In recent years, however, this trend has been reversed. Many forces of religion, which a generation ago seemed to be slowly collapsing by default, are now reorganized, revitalized and constitute a fighting body achieving notable victories. Not only is church membership on the rise but church attendance has vastly improved. The increase in church construction is obvious for all to see. Press, television, radio and

Courtesy of *The Life of the Spirit*, 34 Bloomsbury Street, W. C. 1, London, England, August-September, 1959. A special issue on CONVERSIONS with translation of a conference by Cardinal Roncalli on the Pastoral Office of the Bishop.

movies—all reflect this trend by increased attention to religion.

Politics, too, contributes its evidence. "A professed unbeliever," notes one observer "would be anathema to either political party. It is a rare campaigner who does not mention God in each of his talks. Some of the speeches of public officials sound almost like sermons. Church attendance is expected of men in high political office."

HEALTHY ELEMENTS

It should be acknowledged that the impelling motives of some people and the quality of the religion to which many are returning are severely criticized. Most of us who are actively engaged in convert work, however, believe that the critics overlook numerous sound elements in the revival. Religion is debated on the college campus; St. Thomas has returned to many universities; scientists are more conscious of the limitations of their special disciplines; and educators endeavor to restore religious instruction to young Americans. Nor are penance, humble worship and dependence on God absent from the religious practice of throngs of people.

We are not blind to the selfishness, superficiality and unconscious irreverence that often accompanies the return to religion. But we recall that the first steps in conversion are frequently awkward and often unpromising. There were stages in the journey of Augustine and Newman—not to mention that of the Prodigal Son—when their ultimate conversion might have seemed highly unlikely.

Those who are in daily contact with non-Catholic inquirers are more inclined to agree with Bishop Sheen who believes that "ten million Americans are ripe for conversion" and that "the age of indifference to religion is passed." Insecurity, frustration and fear in an age which sits on a global powder-keg has restored respect for religion. And a huge proportion of this interest is directed toward the Catholic Church. Once our main obstacle was apathy; today we must multiply means of communicating with those whose concern with religion has been revived.

The second favorable element is the changed status of the Catholic in America and his growing awareness of his apostolic obligations. A great English churchman a

few years ago described the new situation of the Church in England in the phrase "out of the catacombs." A similar situation in America is often characterized as "out of the ghetto."

In slightly over 150 years, Catholics in America have advanced numerically from 25 thousand to about 40 million. This unprecedented growth was largely the result of immigration. Heroic efforts were made to form this body, without unnecessary delay, into an indigenous church and to capitalize on the good will that has never been wanting among a certain number of non-Catholics.

But Providence decreed that it take longer than was expected by the optimistic. The urgent problems that confronted the American hierarchy were mountain high. There was the need for priests, churches and schools to care for the unending streams of newcomers; they had to contend with the poverty and lack of education of the immigrants; a constant trial was the bigotry, dislike and discrimination from which Catholics suffered.

ON THE DEFENSIVE

It is not surprising that for long decades many Catholics adopted an attitude of minority defensiveness and that many withdrew to a sort of ghetto. One can understand why many were inclined to say, "why be concerned with conversions? We have enough to do to take care of our own."

This relative isolation and spirit of defensiveness, while it has not ceased entirely, is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. The Church has become solidly established; Catholics have advanced socially, economically and culturally; and they have become a part of the main stream of our national life.

Cardinal Newman once noted that "the Church must be prepared for converts, as well as converts prepared for the Church." And there is massive evidence to show that the Catholic in America has taken many giant strides toward this necessary preparation.

A symbol of this changed status could be recognized when the National Council of Catholic Men recently held their biennial national convention in Detroit. Hundreds of Catholic men, from every corner of the nation, participated in workshops

Catholic scholars have won respect and a hearing for the Church in intellectual circles

and study groups on practically every aspect of the Lay Apostolate. Twenty-five years ago, these Catholic men would have been content with a mammoth parade to exhibit Catholic numerical strength. Today they search for means of applying their Christian knowledge, influence and example in every area of our national life.

The late Father James Martin Gillis, in one of his last articles, summed up the significance of all this as follows: "Here in the United States we have made great progress since our grandfathers' day. The advance has been not only in numbers, wealth, social position, but—much better—in the interest and the esteem that our fellow citizens feel in us, our Church and our religion."

It is impossible in a brief summary to do more than allude to some of the means employed to help win converts in America. These instruments, while not as numerous or effective as they might be, do constitute a vigorous apostolate. And it is constantly attracting an increasing number of apostles among priests and lay people.

"Long before we have made it fashionable to be Catholic we may have made it fashionable to sympathize with Catholicism," Hilaire Belloc once remarked. Before large scale conversions are won in America an ancient wall of division between Catholics and our separated brethren must be breached. The prevailing view of the Church held by the generality of people needs to be improved as a necessary preparation for Faith. And an enormous effort is being made to make fruitful contact with non-Catholics, to dispel their ignorance of the Church and to help them understand her aims, teaching and practices.

Considerable credit is due to numerous Catholic scholars who have won respect and a hearing in intellectual circles. They do not attempt to win converts directly. But they bring the wisdom of Catholicism to bear on the huge problems that beset our nation. In their efforts to work for the common good and throw light on the role of religion in our pluralist society, they have earned the confidence of non-Catholic

scholars. And they are winning understanding—if not always acceptance—for the philosophical and theological principles of Catholicism and their relevance to the complex problems of our time.

There is no medium of communication which Catholics do not employ. Press, radio, television—locally or on a national scale—bring into millions of homes Catholic doctrinal and moral teachings, or programs designed to acquaint non-Catholics with some aspect of Catholic life. Catholic Information Centers, Correspondence or Home Study Courses by mail, Missions for Non-Catholics, Study Clubs, Parochial Libraries, Pamphlet Racks in railroad stations—these are some of the many means that are employed to attract attention to the Church, convey information and instruction and improve the good will of our neighbors.

Highly significant, and of great promise, is the fact that the tone of Catholic apologetics tends to be more irenic. Whereas in former days many were apt to stress polemic tactics and defense of the Church, there is a more widespread attempt today to employ the "friendly approach."

Two fairly recent developments, one on the level of the diocese and the other at the parochial level, have proved to be especially effective. The first is the establishment of a Bureau of Information attached to the Chancery in 60 of the 138 archdioceses and dioceses of the country.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

In 1956 the Audit of the American Institute of Management attracted world-wide attention by its critical judgment on the manner in which the Catholic Church handled its "public relations."

"Nor does the Church handle its affairs particularly well on the public-information or publicity front," the report noted. "Having first used the word propaganda, the Holy See has failed to utilize the best talent in the field. Time and again it puts its worst vestment forward, when the best side could easily be shown." For long decades, except for notable exceptions, this criticism might equally have been directed

at the Catholic population of America.

The Catholic Church with her institutions and personnel looms large in American life. Newsworthy events of all sorts are happening daily and the news agencies are eager to report these Catholic activities fully and accurately. Too often, they are thwarted by the reluctance of Catholics to provide them with the facts.

In order to get our full measure of favorable attention, the priest in charge of the diocesan Bureau of Information remains in constant contact with the news agencies. He can always be reached by them whenever they wish information concerning the Church or her activities. And many of these directors hold institutes for the clergy, religious and laity of the diocese to coach them in the art of public relations.

"OPEN HOUSE"

An attempt to create better understanding of Catholicism among our more immediate neighbors is a plan called the "Open House." On a designated Sunday afternoon, non-Catholics within a parish are all invited to visit the local Catholic church. Lay guides are on hand to welcome them and conduct them on a guided tour of the House of Prayer. Every detail of the church and its appointments—and their significance in the religious life of Catholics—is explained. From the holy water font to altar, tabernacle, and sacristy, non-Catholics have an opportunity to learn and to ask questions.

As groups complete the tour they are escorted to a place where refreshments are served and where they can meet the pastor and curates and the teaching Sisters. Toward the end of the afternoon a sermon is preached and the day closes with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

The "Open House" idea has proved to be so effective that all the parishes of an entire diocese have sometimes sponsored such an event simultaneously. One of the most ambitious exemplifications of this plan was recently tried by all the Negro parishes of a section of New York City.

The reaction of a Negro reporter on the staff of the daily paper *New York Journal American* is typical: "To a Protestant reporter," he writes, "the warmth and friendliness of the Catholic priests, nuns and laymen were immediately evident and grat-

ifying. Persons outside the Catholic Faith too seldom have an opportunity to talk informally with priests and nuns . . . there were no high pressure propagandists. But, throughout it all, you could not escape the obvious peace and serenity which the devout Catholic seems to find in his religious life."

Those whose favorable attention has been won are ultimately invited to attend an inquiry class or information class at one of the parishes or Information Centers. Many American priests were once inclined to prefer individual instruction to group instruction of converts. But with the increase in the number of inquirers and greater experience in the time-honored, manifold advantages of group instruction, classes for converts have greatly multiplied. These classes usually meet twice a week and extend over a period of three months. And each inquirer has private meetings with the priest-instructor insofar as these are helpful or necessary.

Priests who conduct these courses usually arrange three series each year. On four Sundays preceding the opening of each course, an announcement is made at all the Masses concerning the nature and purpose of the course and the need of fervent prayer for its success. Each parishioner is urged to invite non-Catholic relatives, friends or neighbors who have manifested any degree of good-will, curiosity or interest in the Church. Since our Catholic laity are intimately acquainted with the most likely prospects and are in the best position to extend a warm personal invitation, it is easily seen why we find this the best means of recruiting well-attended classes.

Next, the parish census cards are examined and a list is made of all the non-Catholics who are married to Catholics. The pastor addresses a cordial personal letter to each of them, acquainting them with the details of the course, the advantages of attending it, and inviting them to come for one or all the lessons. Many priests find this letter to the non-Catholics in a mixed marriage second only to the zeal of the laity in winning the attendance of non-Catholic inquirers.

Since it is an established principle of good publicity to try to attract favorable attention in as many ways as possible, priests normally employ additional means

of publicizing the class. Placards are usually placed in the vestibule of the parish church, and in the principal shops of the vicinity; leaflets are given to the laity as they leave the Church after Mass; leaflets are sometimes delivered to all the homes in the vicinity; and, in some places, lay people make a personal call on all the people within the parish. Some priests advertise in the daily or diocesan newspaper; place notices in trains and buses; and procure time on radio or television. Each locality has its own obstacles and opportunities in achieving effective publicity; and experience is the best test of what means are to be employed.

INQUIRY CLASSES

The course is usually advertised as an opportunity for all types of inquirers who seek accurate information regarding the Church. They are invited to attend one or all the lessons and are assured that no previous decision to become a Catholic is required. They are told that our main purpose is to provide an objective presentation of Catholic doctrines and practices and that any final step must be a matter of personal conviction and co-operation with God's grace.

Questions are invited on the lesson for the evening or on topics previously discussed. Other questions may be addressed to the priest who is available before and after every class. A catechism is given each inquirer; and a supply of leaflets, pamphlets and books are at his disposal. The priest-instructor encourages private interviews with each inquirer; and tactfully seeks out those who are reticent. No catechumen is baptized who has not had a certain number of private conversations with the priest who conducts the class.

Many priests, three or four times during the series, provide mimeographed tests which are answered in writing by the inquirers. These tests are usually extremely simple, but they enable the priest to gauge the progress of his catechumens.

This general plan offers to a non-Catholic a proposal that is obviously cordial and sincere, one that appeals to his sense of fairness and one that reduces to a minimum the difficulties of undertaking a comprehensive course in Catholic teaching. It also presents our Catholic laity with a

practical program for their zeal in the personal apostolate toward Christ's "other sheep." And it enables any priest to meet non-Catholics half way, regardless of their original motive or degree of interest and provides him with a means for facilitating their instruction.

Of course, some non-Catholics who attend have already decided to enter the Church. Others approach merely out of curiosity and attend only a few lectures. But for those who complete the course, a familiar pattern can be recognized. Prejudices dissolve, obscurity or ignorance give way to understanding, and motives undergo a gradual purification. The Church is fully recognized as the true spiritual home of all mankind.

Inquirers come to recognize that she offers the only means of fulfilling our best and noblest aspirations and is the only teacher who really answers the deepest questions of the soul. The accumulative effect of elucidating each of the mysteries of Faith and their inner connection—along with an ever deepening appreciation of the means of grace—beget conviction.

Meanwhile, the campaign for prayer, sacrifice—among the school children, nuns, the sick, the daily memento at Mass of the priest, and the devotions of the parishioners—has won rich graces. When the course is about two-thirds completed, approximately seventy-five per cent of the catechumens will have decided to become Catholics.

ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENTS

Within the last decade especially, there have been numerous developments in the manner of conducting these classes. In some parishes, instead of one priest undertaking the entire burden, all the priests participate. Sometimes two or three priests alternate in giving the lectures.

In other parishes, one priest gives a ten-minute review of the matter previously covered, a second gives the lecture of the evening, and a third answers the questions. And there are numerous variations on these methods. Their principal merit is to engage all the local clergy in the parish campaign for converts and to benefit by the special individual quality that each can bring.

There is a growing tendency to enlist

the full talents of the laity in conducting these classes. I know a priest who has selected and trained 100 lay people and has organized them in five praesidia of the Legion of Mary. These legionaries enroll newcomers to the course; take charge of the films, slides and charts used as visual aids; distribute the tests and correct the answers when returned; and are responsible for the rather extensive clerical work in a program that wins 250 converts each year.

These legionaries also participate in the actual instruction of converts. When an inquirer indicates that his interest is more than casual, a lay person—chosen according to similarity in age, education and background—is assigned to assist him. This legionary takes him for a tour of the church, coaches him in the use of missal, rosary, manner of participating at Mass and in receiving the Sacraments. He gives advice to the inquirer regarding suitable pamphlets and books. And he instructs the catechumen on those lessons which the latter is sometimes obliged to miss.

CATECHETICAL REVIVAL

The ideals and principles of the new catechetical movement are having an ever deeper influence on American convert work. The revival in catechetics brings new insights to our aims and methods in the field of religious education. Just a year ago, two Chicago priests who are noted for their devotion to the lay apostolate and to convert work, published a new catechism for adults.

Life in Christ by Fathers James Killgallon and Gerard Weber (which Sheed and Ward is publishing in England under another title) is a major event in American catechetics and in the apostolate to non-Catholics. Within twelve months, the demand for this new catechism was so great that three editions totaling 250,000 copies have been sold. And translations are being prepared in Japanese, Chinese, Malayan and one for South India. This text represents a middle ground between the older manuals and the strictly kerygmatic approach in catechetics.

Older catechisms for converts were apt to be severely logical in their approach, concerned with proofs and answers to Protestant objections, deficient in the use of

Scripture and Liturgy and sought to give information rather than to form souls. *Life in Christ* certainly does not neglect logic, nor omit proofs; there is no fundamental doctrine in the traditional texts which it omits. But it aims not only to teach a doctrine but to proclaim the "good news of Christ." It seeks to instruct while forming disciples.

In addition to a concern with theology and philosophy, it takes into account the psychology of learning, uncovers the riches of Scripture and initiates the catechumen into the treasures of the Liturgy. Awakening doctrinal convictions are accompanied by some specific Catholic practice—and practical suggestions to this end conclude each chapter.

Twenty-five years ago, when a convert was received, comparatively little was done in many parishes to assure his adjustment or assist his growth to full Christian maturity. A convert was often left to shift for himself. Priests who have studied this matter tell us that as a consequence of our unconscious neglect, 16 per cent of our converts lapse from the faith.

Today we expend greater efforts to ease the period of transition, deepen the convert's inner appreciation of the faith and his growth in holiness, and to enlist his talents for winning other converts.

The Guilds of St. Paul constitute a national organization, founded by Monsignor Nienaber, to provide this indispensable assistance. These Guilds welcome the newly baptized, along with their relatives and friends, and arrange social, educational and spiritual activities. As converts become Catholics "to the manner born" it is expected that they join other societies in the parish and cease to think of themselves as latecomers to the Church.

Other convert centers, have less formal organization, but encourage new converts to attend more advanced courses, to make retreats, to seek spiritual direction, and to avail themselves of library facilities.

We certainly are not converting our country rapidly, nor is our potential zeal being fully utilized. There is, however, a devoted, enterprising apostolate to American non-Catholics under way. And it is supported by many who pray for more laborers and for the supernatural graces without which all labor for souls must remain sterile. ■ ■ ■



A First Lecture to Prospective Converts

By Most Reverend Fulton J. Sheen

When non-Catholic inquirers come for their first lesson, what points should we stress? America's leading winner of converts tells how he treats this initial and most important of all the instructions.

1. You are not here because you are going to join the Catholic Church—you are here to investigate it.

There is no more obligation to embrace the Church because you take instructions, than there is a duty to buy a mink coat because you enter into a department store. On the other hand, even though you were willing, the Church would not let you join, unless you knew its teachings and the Church was certain of your good dispositions of soul. As St. Peter said: "If anyone asks you to give an account of the hope which you cherish, be ready at all times to answer for it" (I Peter 3, 15).

2. There is only one thing required of you at the beginning, and that is good will.

Good will is readiness to accept the truth. Someone might prove to you that there was sunlight outside of the window, but all the proof in the world would be useless, unless you had the good will to lift up the curtain to allow it to enter the room.

3. Though good will comes from you, God must add something to it, and that is what is called actual grace.

Actual grace is a momentary or transient illumination of the mind to see a truth

which was not previously seen, or to do something about that truth which was not previously done. When conversion, therefore, is completed it will be found to be a conjunction of good will with the grace of God.

You may think that you have decided to take instructions because you read a certain book, or were inspired by a certain person, or had reached a decision through your own wisdom. These are not the cause, but only the occasion. The real cause is God Himself.

As Our Blessed Lord said: "I am the Way; I am Truth and Life; nobody can come to the Father, except through me" (John 14, 6). It is our good will that responds to a God-initiated call.

4. To understand the fullness of the truth, it is necessary not only to study but also to lead a good life.

Not all men are outside of the Church because of ignorance; some are outside of it because of the way they live. Most people do not have difficulty with the creed; they have difficulty with the commandments.

Courtesy of Christ to the World, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1959. Lungotevere Dei Vallati, 1, Rome, Italy.

Good behavior or a moral life are just as essential as study and knowledge. It is the clean of heart that see God. As Our Blessed Lord said: "Anyone who acts shamefully hates the light, will not come into the light, for fear that his doings will be found out" (John 3, 20).

As a bank robber does not like to have the searchlight of a policeman fixed upon him in his crime, so neither do sinners who are unwilling to abandon their sinful ways like to have the searchlight of God's truth on their wickedness.

5. You will not begin your instructions with faith, you will begin them with reason.

Just as you cannot go into any store and ask for credit without an investigation having been made of your ability to pay, so neither can you have faith in Christ without a reason for believing Him. These reasons are called motives of credibility. Instead, therefore, of faith being contrary to reason it actually begins with it. That is why instructions in Christian doctrine are not the same as indoctrination into Communism. Communism is forced upon the mind, whereas Christianity is a free correspondence with God's grace.

Furthermore, Communism is contrary to human nature with its hate, whereas Christianity is the perfection of human nature and particularly of human reason. As the telescope does not destroy the eye, so neither does faith destroy reason, but rather opens up to the vision of other worlds.

6. Though there will come a moment in the instructions when you will become absolutely convinced that Christ is the Son of the Living God, True God and True Man, you must not think that this acceptance of His Divinity is due solely to your reason, your judgment, or to a study of the motives of credibility.

This tremendous conviction comes from God Himself through the gift of Faith. When Peter affirmed the Divinity of His Master he was told: "It is not flesh and blood, it is my Father in heaven that has revealed this to thee." (Matthew 16, 17).

7. The gravity and the number of your sins are not an obstacle to coming to the Church.

It is rather the recognition of our sinful-

ness that makes our soul clamor for a Savior and a Redeemer. Just as we sometimes can run up more debts than we can pay, so we know that of and by our own resources we cannot make up for sins. Hence Christ, Who is the Son of God, became Man.

As Man He could take our sins upon Himself, as God his reparation and atonement for them on the Cross would have infinite merit. The worst thing in the world is not sin, it is far worse to deny sin. He who is blind and denies vision has no hope for a cure. If you had never sinned you never could call Christ, Savior.

8. The instructions will lead to an understanding of another life than that of the physical or the natural.

Two little tadpoles in the water were one day discussing the possibility of another kind of existence than their own. One said that he was going to look for another world. His companion said: "Don't be so foolish as to think there is anything else in the world besides water."

As it would be foolish for the rose to deny that there was a higher life than that of the plants, so it is foolish for man to deny that there is a higher life than that of the human. This life which is above the natural is called supernatural, which means above the natural, and is the life of God in which we participate once we are united to Christ.

You are natural because you were born of your parents; you are supernatural because you were born of God. That is why Sacred Scripture always urges us to *become* something that we are not. By nature we are only creatures; by supernatural grace, we are children of God.

It is possible to put a pebble in a gold setting but the gold setting was made for a diamond; so it is possible for us to go on living human natural lives though we were made to become settings for the Divine life of grace.

9. All during your instructions you must pray.

Though you may know no formal prayers, say many times during the day this simple invocation: "O Lord, give me a knowledge of the truth and a strength to follow it." Let your first petition be to know the fullness of truth, not mere frag-

ments of it that come from human knowledge. When finally truth does come to your mind, you will see that all the bits of information that you had before were like the crazy patterns of a Japanese lantern. But after Divine Truth comes into your mind it is like a candle put into that lantern, in which everything is revealed as a beautiful design.

But, it is not enough to merely know the truth. Truth implies tremendous responsibility. There are many who like to knock at the door of truth, but they would hate to see it open. That is why you must add the second prayer, the strength to follow the truth as you see it.

St. Paul condemned the Romans: "Although they had the knowledge of God, they did not honor Him or give thanks to Him as God . . . and their senseless hearts grew benighted" (Romans 1, 21). During the time of instructions remember that there are thousands of blessings suspended from heaven on silken cords, and prayer is the sword that cuts them.

10. Be prepared for the enmity and hatred of the world.

If you joined a sun cult, or one of the Oriental religions, or became a Moslem, or started a religion of your own, your friends would say to you, "Well he's free and that is the way he believes." But just as soon as you embrace the Church you will be accused of having lost your reason, of having surrendered your freedom, and of cutting off the pleasures of life. It is the Church that makes the difference.

So long as you join any natural religion you are part of the world, therefore, the world accepts you. But when you embrace the Church, you are lifted out of the natural into the supernatural order; your mind undergoes a complete reversal of values, the world sees that it has lost its own and therefore, it will despise you.

Our Blessed Lord warned that this would happen. "If the world hates you be sure that it hated Me before it learned to hate you. If you belonged to the world, the world would know you for its own and love you; it is because you do not belong to the world, because I have singled you out from the midst of the world that the world hates you. Do not forget what I said to you. No servant can be greater than His Master" (John 15, 18).

11. Be not disturbed by any prejudices against the Church which you bring to your first instructions.

Perhaps if I had your education and had been told the same lies against the Church that you have been told, I might have hated the Church ten times more than you do. You do not hate the Church, you only hate that which you mistakenly believe to be the Church.

When you look at stained glass windows from the outside of a church, they seem to have no pattern, they are only a mass of crazy leaden lines; but once you are in the church, these windows glow with scriptural figures. So the Church will shine before your soul as Christ continuing and living through the ages, once you are in it.

12. Your greatest joys are before you.

Even if there are sorrows and trials in your life they will be made sweet through the cross. All other religions are sunshine religions. The Catholic Faith begins not with sunshine but with the shadow, not with the feast but with the fast, not with the Resurrection but the Cross. We begin with defeat and end in glory.

In the faith, you will come to the fullness and perfection of love. As the highest peak of love in the natural order is the union of two in one flesh in matrimony, so in the reception of Communion you have the union of two in one Christ which is the perfection of love. In the future, you will refrain from sin not because it is the breaking of a law, but because it is the wounding of Someone you love.

From the day of your conversion onward, you will read your own autobiography on the crucifix. Every sin of pride will be seen as the crown of thorns, every grasping avarice will be seen in the nailed Hands, every wandering from God's grace will be told in the riven Feet, every errant love will be read in the wounded Heart, but there will never be despair but love, for you will say with St. John of the Cross:

*Oh sweet burn! Oh, delectable wound!
Oh, soft Hand, Oh, delicate touch
That savors eternal life and pays every
debt,
In slaying thou has changed my death
to life.*

Everything in a Nutshell

Parish Program for Converts

By Reverend Harry E. Majerus

I. Preparation of Lessons

- (1) Write out a little friendly talk to a non-Catholic friend.
 - (A) Consult a catechism on same subject (*Catechism for Adults*, Coogan; *Catechism for Inquirers*, Malloy; *Life In Christ*, Killgallon and Weber).
 - (B) Assume they know nothing. Don't tell everything you know. They can only assimilate fundamentals now.
 - (C) Three good rules (borrowed from Bishop Brady):
 - (a) Get into the middle of your subject at once. To get interest, use imaginary cases, current events, stories.
 - (b) Analogies aplenty (cf. Bishop Sheen). Proceed from known to unknown.
 - (c) Simplicity (cf. Fr. Lord). Don't try to impress: teach.
- (2) Prepare a mimeographed outline for each lesson.
 - (A) Read all the popular presentations of the subject you can, and then write down *your own*. (An "outline" has numbers and letters, as has this page, not long paragraphs!)
 - (B) Give reference readings on subject in New Testament, and in *Father Smith Instructs Jackson*. Have pamphlets available.
 - (C) Concentration time is less than ten minutes at a time. Break your lecture up with anecdotes, jokes, etc.

II. Presentation of Lessons (Friendly and Personal Interest)

- (1) Make your audience comfortable, create *informal* atmosphere.
- (2) In large class, stand, move around, have blackboard, rostrum.
- (3) Get to know your audience before and after classes.
- (4) Have basic texts available first class.
- (5) Have outlines distributed *after* each class.
- (6) Have registration cards and attendance slips available.
- (7) Vary lessons with film, film strips, guest speakers.

- (8) Begin and end promptly: 45 minutes lecture, 15 minutes written questions.
- (9) Be available before and after class in private office.
- (10) Be friendly: you are the Catholic Church to them.
- (11) Distribute tests on *Father Smith Instructs Jackson* after topic is covered. Allow a week to complete it. Give Catholic fiancée test, too.
- (12) Oral review of catechism after each of last six classes.
- (13) Private conference with each candidate for special difficulties.
- (14) Feed parish clubs with those definitely interested.
- (15) Repeat in each class in different words: "You've been robbed." That is: Whatever religion they profess is only part of the whole truth, which is to be found in its fullness in the Catholic Church.
- (16) First class, introductions, you and your audience. Set-up of classes. Religion means of happiness; film and short talk on Mass.
- (17) Announce Mass hours, give leaflet missals for first Sundays.
- (18) Have coffee break before review classes, informal chats.

III. Publicity (Make the Parish Convert-Conscious)

- (1) Parish door-to-door canvass, census, pamphlets: *by parishioners*.
- (2) Contact mixed marriages by personal letters; past converts; free time on radio, TV, papers (local), posters, hand cards.
- (3) From pulpit announce classes at least on 4 consecutive Sundays. Prayer pledge sheet in parish bulletin, give out hand cards.
- (4) Have school children invite non-Catholic parents to come.
- (5) Speak at city-wide Catholic clubs about class.
- (6) Meet all the non-Catholics at mixed marriage receptions.
- (7) Know non-Catholic children of your parish.
- (8) Invite those who came just a few times to last year's classes.
- (9) Provide room for non-Catholic relatives at baptism, Vigil.
- (10) Know and patronize your non-Catholic merchants, parishioners.

IV. Prayer (A Supernatural End Demands Supernatural Means)

- (1) Masses, prayers, self-denial, *by instructor*.
- (2) Get nuns, shut-ins (!), fervent Catholics, to pray, suffer for class.
- (3) Get school children to adopt a candidate by number.
- (4) Give prayer pledges to parishioners, apostolic groups.
- (5) Have nightly services a week before: Unity Octave novena.
- (6) Have the "Convert Club" meeting monthly offer special prayers.
- (7) "One soul is of more value than the whole world." Believe it, and live it.

Guide Lights

SECOND NATIONAL CONVERT CONFERENCE . . .

The Paulist Fathers are sponsoring another convention of a cross-section of American priests interested in the Apostolate to non-Catholics. Meetings will be held at St. Paul's College, at the Catholic University in Washington, D. C., from October 20th to October 22nd. Principal speakers will include Mr. Frank Sheed; Father John L. Thomas, S.J., the noted Sociologist; Father John A. O'Brien; and Father Gerard Sloyan, Director of the Religious Education Department at the Catholic University of America. Panel discussions include topics like "Types of Converts" and "Interesting Priests in Convert Work." Panelists will represent some of the most successful convert-makers in the country. We ask a memento in your Masses for the widest possible success of this important conference.

HARTFORD APOSTOLATE . . .

Good news comes from Father Edward McLean of Hartford, one of the speakers at last year's Conference on Convert Work. Father McLean is now stationed at the Hartford Cathedral where he is in charge of the Inquiry Class. He is organizing six other classes throughout the parishes of the city and in the suburbs. These classes will be directed by priests assigned to the parishes who will be in touch with Father McLean. Publicity expense will be met by the diocese. And it includes overhead bus ads, with complete coverage in the newspapers, on TV and radio in advance of the classes.

LAY SOCIETIES . . .

The Knights of Columbus attending their 77th international convention in St. Louis were urged to become "mediators between the Church and the world" by means of the lay apostolate. Bishop John P. Cody of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo., urged the Knights not to waste the resources of their organization on the "pursuit of the trivial." He told them: "As individuals, you cannot rest in your efforts to know Christ and to

make Him known to others." Bishop Cody preached at a Solemn Pontifical Mass offered by Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter of St. Louis to mark the start of the convention.

The Bishop described the "more profound realization of the nature of the Church reached by so many members of the laity" as one of the "great advances made by the Church within recent decades." Included in this deeper realization of the nature of the Church, he said, is "a fuller understanding of the position of the Christian laity. . . . To be a Christian is not simply to believe in the word of God revealed in Christ, nor is it simply to obey the moral code proclaimed by Christ, nor is it simply an imitation of Christ," the bishop explained. "It is all of these things, but it is something much more. In essence, it is being one with Christ."

Bishop Cody examined the specific lay apostolate of the Knights of Columbus. He warned Knights against letting their society be thought of as a kind of "club" or "lodge" for men who happen to be Catholics. "The Knights of Columbus should not exist only to provide life insurance or companionship for Catholic laymen," he said. "To provide these things is undoubtedly a worthy goal—but an inadequate one." Bishop Cody commended the Knights for such projects as their national advertising campaign to explain the Church to non-Catholics, their sponsorship of the microfilming of the contents of the Vatican Library and their public information centers.

He said the Knights have shown "great devotion" to the teaching mission of the lay apostolate by these projects. The organization is especially well fitted to this work. "The Knights of Columbus have great strength and prestige," Bishop Cody declared. "In the past you have been worthy instruments of God's grace. As for the future, you must not lose yourselves in trivialities nor be content with mediocrity. Keep always before you what it really means to be a layman, a member of Christ's Mystical Body, and therefore a person called to fulfill Christ's mission."

NATIONAL GUILDS OF ST. PAUL . . .

The fourth biennial convention of this organization founded by Monsignor Nienaber Lexington, Ky., was held recently in Lexington, Ky. The guilds are organized in every section of the country to help converts adjust themselves in the Church and enlist their zeal. New officers were elected and a constitution was adopted. Mr. Dale Francis, a convert who was once a Methodist minister, and is now editor of *The Lone Star Catholic*, diocesan paper of Austin, Texas, was one of the principal speakers.

The "new apologetics" of the Church in this country should put emphasis on "aiming at the heart" as well as at the head, the speaker advised. "We have aimed at the head so long that we have too often neglected the heart. . . ." In a laudable attempt to counter the emotional character of evangelical Protestantism, Catholic apologists stressed "a clear, logical presentation of facts, an appeal directly to reason."

However, Mr. Francis said, the time has now come for Catholics to "show in their fullness the colors of the Faith. The apologetics of the Faith must still present the Faith reasonably with logic, still aim for the head. But the once cold presentation of facts must now be combined with the love and the brilliance and the warmth of the Faith."

In the field of apologetics he declared, Catholics must take pains to make their language "understandable and not ambiguous to the non-Catholic. 'Holy Eucharist,' 'genuflect,' 'Real Presence' are words not in the ordinary vocabulary of the non-Catholic," he reminded his listeners. In addition, he said, words that mean one thing to a Catholic may mean another to a member of another faith—for example, Baptism will mean different things to a Catholic and a Baptist.

Mr. Francis said he did not advocate doing away with "Catholic words" which are used almost exclusively in connection with the Church. But he said Catholics should be sure to explain clearly the meaning of such words when talking with non-Catholics. "Never overestimate the Protestant knowledge of the Catholic Faith and language," Mr. Francis said. "But never underestimate the amount of good will toward the Church on the part of people outside the Catholic Church."

C. C. D. REGIONAL CONGRESSES . . .

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine will hold no less than seven regional congresses during the fall of 1959. These congresses should enlist the wholehearted support of every reader of *GUIDE*. In addition to the congress already held at Burlington, Vt., September 18-20, the following are projected:

Locations	For the Provinces of
Joliet, Illinois Oct. 30-Nov. 1	Chicago
Miami, Florida Oct. 22-24	Baltimore
Mobile, Alabama Oct. 4-6	New Orleans
Pittsburgh, Pa. to be announced	Philadelphia
Portland, Oregon Oct. 2-5	Portland and Seattle
Rochester, New York Oct. 11-12	New York

ASSOCIATED CONFRATERNITY CLUBS . . .

Father Raymond Luckner, C. C. D. Director of St. Paul, Minnesota, reports in *Our Parish Confraternity* for August on a Confraternity activity that might well be copied elsewhere. . . .

The Associated Confraternity Clubs of St. Paul are a unique experiment of the Religious Discussion Club movement. The ACC is a federation of parish Discussion Clubs for single young adults. Each member club functions as part of the parish CCD. But, because of the interests members have in common with other single young adults, they have associated themselves into a loosely organized federation of clubs in order to carry on inter-club activities which would not otherwise be possible. . . .

Each club has two members on the central board of ACC. At the monthly board meetings, inter-club religious, educational, cultural and social activities are planned by the members of four committees. The archdiocesan CCD director is spiritual advisor for the federation.

Once a month a Communion breakfast is held in the parish of one of the clubs. The sponsoring group prepares and serves the breakfast and secures a speaker, usually from the CCD Apostolate of Good Will

Speakers' Bureau. Evenings of Recollection are held three or four times a year. The ACC also sponsors retreats and pilgrimages, and promotes CCD projects for the poor, the aged and orphans.

The social committee plans monthly social events such as picnics, bowling parties, hay rides, dances, etc., which give the members a chance to meet Catholics from other parishes. Needless to say, many fine Catholic marriages have resulted.

The publications committee edits a monthly magazine called *ACC Crier*. Member clubs submit articles and news of club activities. Each club takes a turn at the typing and mimeographing. The public relations committee starts new clubs and makes known the activities of the ACC. . . .

What have been some of the results over the last 25 years? Members have gained an adult knowledge of their Faith during some of the most important years of their lives. They have become articulate, practicing Catholics. They are close to their parishes. By developing an understanding of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in their young adulthood, ACC members have become the leaders of their parish CCD units.

MISSION EXPERTS MEET . . .

The world's leading missiological and liturgical experts—including 30 missionary bishops, some 50 priests from the mission fields (a large number of them native clergy) met in Nijmegen, Holland, from September 12th to 19th this year for a conference which will have an impact on the outlook and practice of missionaries in every land, and on the training of future missionaries. The work of organizing the Congress was started by Father Johannes Hofinger, S.J., of the Institute for Mission Apologetics at Manila, P. I., soon after the Assisi Liturgical Congress of 1956.

To make personal contact with all those concerned he has in the past year traveled from Manila to Formosa, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore, Australia, U. S. A., Holland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy, Ghana, Rhodesia, Tanganyika, Sudan, India, and back to Manila. Missionary Institutes from many lands collaborated for the Congress which was under the presidency of Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay. Other delegates came from leading missionary societies and institutes who, for the most part,

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have had personal experience in the missions before taking their present posts.

Missionaries realize that every possible means for imparting the Christian message and training people to live the Christian life must be used with the utmost effect. And, of recent years, they have come to realize that among these means the Church's Liturgy ranks high. If used to the full, it has an enormous missionary value, instructing and inspiring and deepening the very roots of the Christian life.

This point was brought out very forcibly at the Liturgical Congress at Assisi by one of the speakers who was himself a missionary bishop. His fascinating paper prepared the way for September's Congress at Nijmegen, a Congress at which missionaries themselves could thoroughly thrash out their own liturgical problems, studying the pastoral value of the liturgy, seeking ways to make their own use of it more effective, and determining whether the special circumstances of the missions would render desirable any modifications of present liturgical laws. The results may well be even more widespread, for the lessons learned in the mission fields are of value to the whole Church and point the way to what should be done in countries where the Faith is already established.